



Hispanic Lawyers  
Association of Illinois

## HLAI MEMBER HIGHLIGHT: Ernesto Palomo



Ernesto Palomo filed an amicus brief on behalf of LatinoJustice PRLDEF, along with fifteen other national Latino organizations, in U.S. Supreme Court case styled *Department of Commerce vs. New York*. The case focuses on the legality of adding a question on citizenship status to the 2020 Census. Districts courts in New York, California, and Maryland have enjoined the Department of Commerce, the Census Bureau and the Secretary of Commerce from including the citizenship question on the 2020 Census, and the government appealed the decisions to the Supreme Court.

The brief contains three principle arguments. First, the Trump Administration has created an environment of fear in the Latino community. Through its rhetoric and policy decisions, the Administration has made it clear that immigrants from Latin American countries are not wanted in this country and should be deported immediately. The Administration's hostility towards Latinos has not gone

unnoticed. Since the inauguration, Latinos have avoided interactions with government officials in order to avoid deportation.

Second, given the current anti-immigrant and anti-Latino environment, millions of Latinos will not return their Census questionnaires if a citizenship question is included. Indeed, the Census Bureau's own analysis confirms that, for many Latinos, a fear of deportation outweighs any benefit to being counted in the Census.

Third, the addition of a citizenship question and inevitable undercount of the Latino population will cause massive and lasting harm to the Latino community. It will cause a loss of federal funding for a decade in critical areas such as education, healthcare, and other social services. It will also cause Latino communities to lose representation in the House of Representatives, and in state and local government. Finally, it will reduce capital investments and civic expenditures in emergency services, putting members of the Latino community at risk.

Oral arguments in the Supreme Court will take place on April 23.  
A link to the brief can be found [here](#).

**Bio:** Ernesto Palomo, an immigrant from *San Luis Potosí*, Mexico, is a Partner in Locke Lord LLP's Business Litigation and Arbitration Practice Group and Co-Chair of the Firm's Diversity and Inclusion

Committee. He has extensive experience representing large multinational companies in court and in commercial arbitration proceedings. He also devotes considerable time to pro bono matters through the National Immigrant Justice Center, the Center for Disability and Elder Law, and the Chicago Volunteer Legal Services.

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